

“STRENGTH AT HOME”*

[Address of President Elpidio Quirino
before the student body of the
University of the Philippines,
Monday, October 18,
1948, 4:30 p. m.]

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Coming to the University of the Philippines is to me like returning to an ancestral home. As an alumnus of this institution, I feel the kinship to all and everyone of the faculty and students. Our family is getting bigger, greater, stronger and, consequently, more powerful everyday. There is in this country today no human endeavor in which a member of ours is not found doing creditably his own share in the national up-building. Each and everyone of us here congregated should be proud that he belongs to this family—a family whom history will single out as having mainly shouldered the heaviest task of guiding the steps of the Republic of the Philippines in its tender years.

But, my friends, I did not come to make boasts of our achievement. I came rather to discuss with you the nature of the responsibility we have assumed and the role our country is duty bound to play on the international stage, if we are to survive as an independent people. I consider it proper that you should take time out in your curricular activities, setting a United Nations Week, to devote your attention to the practical consideration of the international problems of the day. I know I will not succeed within a space of a few minutes to analyze and discuss with you at length the present world situation, as a necessary background for this celebration.

The United Nations, now in general assembly in Paris, has devoted all its time to this work for the first three years of its existence. What it has done to furnish this perspective since its organization in San Francisco in 1945, or in its meetings in London, at Lake

Success, or in Paris, is now written in voluminous tomes. For our purposes, this afternoon, however, and for what I have in mind to tell you, it is sufficient to know the incontrovertible fact that the world today has not as yet found the formula to end wars or to make permanent peace. The first world war was ostensibly fought “to make the world safe for democracy”; the second “to end all wars”; and the third, probably, may be to dominate the world, or God forbid, to liquidate humanity. Thus it looks as if to attain peace the whole human creation must achieve a rebirth, a transformation so profound as to erase all distinctions of race, color, and creed and enable all peoples to feel as belonging to one another in heart, in soul, in conscience—one universal family before the eyes of the Creator.

But while humanity is not totally disillusioned—and I am not—and we are hopeful that the United Nations in its present sessions in Paris may successfully find a way of securing universal tranquility, we cannot sit idly and just wait for that happy moment. As a member of the United Nations, we must address ourselves first to the solution of all possible conflicts preventing the establishment of peace within our borders. This is the immediate and primordial task of every nation desirous of contributing to world peace.

I see no logic for employing a world organization in a moment of national crisis that threatens international peace. The tempered wisdom of the citizens, their mutual respect for one another, their restraint against the acts of violence, are far more effective in breaking down an internal crisis than any weapons that can be mustered out, either inside or outside, to quell it. The strength of any world organization for peace lies mainly in the individual efforts for peace of the units composing it. It is, therefore, our paramount and inescapable duty to make the Republic

*From the Manila Times, Oct. 19, 1948.

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of the Philippines a strong place as a worthy unit prop of the United Nations.

But in the midst of the tremendous task of this new and courageous adventure of the peoples of the world, once again we are confronted with the issue of survival—on a world scale and on a national scale—in the face of forces and weapons more fearful than the world had hitherto seen or known.

On a world scale—the question is not whether one nation and its allies can obliterate another nation and its satellites, but whether both nations and their allies and satellites will have much of anything left, after all the fury, to make further effort for civilized living worth the candle.

On a national scale—the question is whether in the light of present world developments, our people can continue to sustain their free institutions and survive as a positive factor for the preservation of a free world.

In either case, we cannot afford to be mere interested spectators. We are deeply involved, are very much part of the tragic show. Mankind appears to be under sentence of complete liquidation, with the execution of sentence only hours away, if reason does not soon prevail.

The representatives of fifty-eight nations are now trying in Paris all their best to make that reason so prevail. That group of men is our very narrow margin of hope. It is our fervent expectation that they can strain their every effort now to convert the United Nations into a strong moral weapon to parry with force, if violence chooses to strike. The United Nations is at the moment on trial, submitted to its supreme test. God grant that the assembly will be a veritable pool of the world's lofty conscience, powerful enough to avoid unnecessary carnage to overrun the universe!

The crisis that stares humanity in the face may yet induce the brute in us to listen to reason. There is certainly a need, an immediate need, of drastic revision in man's thought and action.

I believe that man needs only to be properly challenged in order to respond. The human race has never been challenged by a greater and grimmer crisis than now. This is hardly the time for a romantic pose; the crisis is immediate and demands prompt decision. The United Nations Assembly now in Paris must not adjourn until it has made that decision. Man still has vast reserves of intelligence and courage adequate to meet the challenge of this hour. He has proven it before, and he can prove it again—now or never.

No amount of wishful thinking for any moment can help us in the present situation. I am not a defeatist, much less an alarmist, nor a sensationalist. But the stern reality is that while we hear voices from across the seas that the world situation is improving, military appropriations are being increased, commanders are being commissioned, and fighting forces are being alerted everywhere. As men and women who have stout hearts and who would not abdicate knowledge and intelligence in time of stress, we should not only hope for the best; we must also be prepared for the worst.

This brings me to our no less troubled national situation. Our immediate problem is to maintain a strong democratic government as the keystone to our free institutions. I do not know that any other kind of life can be tolerable and worthwhile without our free institutions.

We face active threats to our accepted ways of freedom. We face dangers that, unless adequately met, can destroy our Republic and render it useless in the preservation of a free world. Every Filipino who loves his country and his people must be concerned with the maintenance of a strong democratic government, the world situation being what it is. By a strong government I mean a government strong in the support, in the trust, and in the loyalty of all the people.

A government is essentially the handiwork of the people. It is what it is because the people make it so. A political party or a group of political

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parties may make or unmake momentous changes at any given time, but can never in fact run the government as they wish because the government is not theirs but the people's. A periodic election in the choice of our public officials is provided so that the people may freely express their will as to how their government should be run. This is also the safety valve which democracy has invented to afford public relief to political or partisan tension and insure faithful reflection of considered popular opinion in the administration of public affairs. Violence and revolution are illegal ways of expressing the popular will. The government, being the symbol of the will and power of the people, should be respected, its laws obeyed and its name and dignity upheld. This should be the utmost determination and ambition of all. And I wish to tell you, my friends, that as long as I am President, that will be my consuming ambition. (Applause).

For the government, I repeat, does not belong to any group. It belongs to the people and comprehends everybody. It includes the last irreconcilable dissident whatever his grievances may be, fancied or otherwise, against the government. It includes the lowest employee of the government who may feel frustrated because he does not move up fast, or his salary is so meager. It includes the omniscient commentator who assumes title to all the wisdom and the virtues and sits back to watch. It includes the sour oppositionist who appropriates all the idealism and the perfection and folds his hands. It includes the middle-class family head who takes offense at having to pay blackmarket price for his cereal. It includes the self-styled liberal who specializes in self-righteousness and moral ostentation. All of us, without any exception, are part and parcel of the government. There is thus no citizen who can wash his hands of his government, not even the humblest toiler, whose whole concern from day to day is to find the wherewithal of his daily rice and that of his family.

When I speak of government strong in the support of the people, I am not asking that our citizens should merely give lip service of cooperation, by press statements or otherwise, but must show actually that they are endowed with the civic spirit to translate their words into deeds, their thoughts into action. What is more important still is for every citizen to continue exercising utmost self-reliance, to have a lively sense of his community obligations, to act upon them on his initiative, and to be responsive to every available opportunity for social cooperation. In other words, he should be a positive entity for good and not a passive one for evil.

Every time a citizen feels like asking what our government is doing about any problem affecting him, say food production, he should also ask himself what he himself is doing about it. He should ask what he is doing in cooperation with his fellow citizens to help resolve it. He should ask what he is doing in cooperation with the government itself to dispose of that problem. To the extent that a citizen exerts himself to meet his own difficulties and cooperates with others in the same direction, he strengthens his own government in doing what it is called upon to do for the good of the community and the nation. What holds true of the food production problem is true of the peace and order problem, the graft and corruption problem—any problem.

Our government can give us only as much as the totality of our citizens is prepared to give it in self-help, in local sacrifice, in vigilant cooperation. Please mark my words: vigilant cooperation. Its food production campaign is essentially a meaningful project in self-reliance, social awareness and common cooperation that tests the validity of our government and leadership. It is a grateful commentary on our people's growing understanding and cooperation of the functions of government that more and more private citizens have volunteered and are volunteering to assist our police forces in cleaning up our troubled areas of elements bent on creating chaos to facilitate their illegal drive to power.

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What our people do, however small in an individual way to increase our food stocks against the day of need, or to hasten the restoration of peace and order and thus secure freedom for productive effort, illustrates the positive opportunities of private citizens to strengthen our government and make it more effective as a real servant of the people.

Of the more pervasive problem of corruption which appears to undermine public faith in our government, may I say that accountability does not rest alone on the wrongdoers; neither is the responsibility exclusively that of the government. As private citizens we should look into our hearts and see that we do not observe a different moral standard. Often, it is the toleration of the double standard of morality by the public itself that lies behind office corruption, all claims to the contrary notwithstanding.

The cure to much of the ills of government which sap it of vitality must not lie alone in loud pious breast-beating at the least provocation of an audience. To be fair it should start from a quiet, honest self-examination before it is projected to public notice. It must start in the conscience of everyone, in the discipline of every heart. In short, we must all be willing to take greater chances of being honest with ourselves. As more and more of our people, leaders and common people alike, clean and clear up their own thoughts and acts, we shall raise the level of our standards of public life and strengthen our government, our

Republic. We shall then be less ready to jump and to shake our fist at our neighbors and our government.

In asking that we all help make the government strong to be equal to the problems of our own time, I merely urge that we as individual citizens also make ourselves strong, that we impose upon ourselves the discipline that makes for vigor and integrity in our minds, in our hearts, in our will. Surely, upon the conduct and the reputation of a people depend the degree of respect for, and strength of, their government, perhaps more than the success or failure of the men that come and go in the government service because they are only there incidentally.

This is the fundamental challenge of our day. To meet the challenge we must be physically and morally strong to make our government strong. We must make our government strong to face the menace to our free institutions at home. We must be strong to meet the eventualities of a disintegrating world situation which endangers the freedoms we have won at so much sacrifice of blood, tears and treasure.

At the most critical times in our national history we have shown that we have the sources, the capacity, the strength required for any emergency at home. We shall not fail the human race in the reserves of courage and intelligence needed elsewhere by the forces of freedom and decency and justice to preserve mankind for greater victories and nobler achievements of the human spirit. Our greatest contribution therefore to world peace and

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Police Law

Nature of office of policeman.—A policeman is not an authority as defined in the Penal Code, but an agent of an authority.¹³ Neither is he an administrative or judicial officer in the sense which that word is used in Article 326 of the Penal Code, regarding the crime of *'acusación o denuncia falsa'*.¹⁴ Therefore, one who makes complaint to a policeman, granting that it be false, is not liable to prosecution under said

article 326.¹⁵

A member of a police force is subordinate to that of a member of the municipal council. The position cannot consequently be occupied by a vice-mayor or by any councilor for "it is very probable that one person could not faithfully and impartially perform the duties of both offices, as they are inconsistent and repugnant to each other."¹⁶

[To be continued]

9. 2nd Ind. Nov. 20, 1946, of Sec. of Int. to Prov. Gov. of Capiz.
10. Op. Staff Judge Advocate, PC, Oct. 23, 1948 and Dec. 9, 1948.
11. Op. Atty. Gen., September 28, 1922.
12. Par. 18, Executive Order 175, s. 1938.
13. U. S. v. Taylor, 6 Phil., 162.
14. Viada, vol. 2, 476.
15. U.S. v. Quiroga, 7, Phil., 390.
16. I. Op. Atty. Gen. p. 555.

Strength

order under the present circumstances is a strong domestic policy for the preservation of our ideals and institutions and for the permanence of peace and prosperity in this our God-given land.

As students and alumni of this university, we are in a peculiar position to recognize our special responsibility

arising from our knowledge, our capacity and our opportunity. This is a rare opportunity in this age and in this epoch of our history. This special responsibility is not to discover special rights and privileges for ourselves. It is to enable all our people to share the discipline, the excitement, the rewards of a life of freedom and creative peace—for our own country and for the world!

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